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THE SOLID SOUTH A NATIONAL CALAMITY.

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OF the Electoral votes of 1904, President Roosevelt received 336, the Hon. Alton B. Parker 140. The latter total was made up as follows: Alabama, 11; Arkansas, 9; Florida, 5; Georgia, 13; Kentucky, 13; Louisiana, 9; Maryland, 7; Mississippi, 10; North Carolina, 12; South Carolina, 9; Tennessee, 12; Texas, 18; Virginia, 12. Eleven of those thirteen States had constituted the Southern Confederacy, while the other two were closely affiliated with it. Of the Electoral votes of 1908, the Hon. William H. Taft received 321, and the Hon. William J. Bryan 160. The latter total was made up as follows: Alabama, 11; Arkansas, 9; Colorado, 3; Florida, 5; Georgia, 13; Kentucky, 13; Louisiana, 9; Maryland, 6; Mississippi, 10; Nebraska, 8; Nevada, 3; North Carolina, 12; Oklahoma, 7; South Carolina, 9; Tennessee, 12; Texas, 18; Virginia, 12. Thus the history of the Electoral battle of 1904 repeated itself, with the addition to the political power of the Solid South of the new and relatively unimportant States of Colorado, Nebraska, Nevada and Oklahoma. And so in the last two Presidential contests the organized political power of the South, with little or no help from without, dashed itself hopelessly against the organized political power of the rest of the

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Union. When contrasted as to population and wealth, the relative strength of the combatants in the last battle stood as follows: The total population, according to the census of 1900, of the States which cast their Electoral votes for Mr. Bryan is 24,060,538; their total wealth, \$15,163,645,550. The total population of the States which cast their Electoral votes for Mr. Taft is 50,945,017; their total wealth, \$71,545,347,892. Intrenched behind such a victory, with such an aggregate of population and wealth supporting him, is it at all likely that a statesman as able, as experienced, as patriotic, as human as Mr. Taft can be dislodged in the next eight years? When the end of that period arrives, what will it profit the South to invite some new political chieftain from the North or West to lead her, as a sectional organization, to inevitable disaster in a fresh conflict involving national issues that are not sectional.

Of the fifteen Presidents elected prior to 1861 the South furnished nine; of the fourteen Vice-Presidents elected prior to that time, the South furnished six. Since John C. Breckenridge took his seat as Vice-President, March 4, 1857, no Southern man has been elected President or Vice-President of the United States. Nay, more, within that period of fifty years, no Southern man has ever been nominated, seriously, for either office. As all the world knows, in the last two contests, in which the South furnished substantially all of the Electoral votes, neither of the nominating Conventions would have dared to name any Southern man, however able or distinguished, even for the second place. Since the end of the Civil War the fact has been universally recognized that, from the standpoint of practical politics, Southern statesmen are not eligible as candidates for the highest offices within the gift of the American people. Is it to the interest of the South to be thus excluded for all time from the Union, so far as the highest political honors are concerned; is it to the interest of the South, in contesting issues purely national, to be chained, as a sectional organization, within lines that mean inevitable political disaster? Certainly, the time has arrived when the South should ascertain whether such a hopeless condition of things is the result of a removable cause.

Those who witnessed the terrors of Reconstruction need not be told why it was that the Southern States drew together as a unit in order to meet a condition that threatened their existence,

when sudden and universal emancipation was followed by sudden and universal enfranchisement. While the future of the South was still overcast by the consequences of a condition that rested like a blight upon every interest, the great and resolute Senator George, of Mississippi, perceived that a constitutional and efficient remedy could be drawn from the reserved powers of the States to regulate the franchise. The system of representative government which England invented and gave to the world rested, at the outset, upon the principle that only the specially qualified few possessed the right to vote. As late as 1832, of the entire population of the British Isles only about 400,000 had the right to vote. Upon the immemorial right of exclusion all of our original State constitutions were founded. Our Federal system adopted as a corner-stone the exclusive right of the State to regulate the franchise. The Fifteenth Amendment, in imposing the single existing limitation on the power of a State to regulate the franchise, only denies to a State the right to take it away "on account of race, color or previous condition of servitude." Such was the power and such the limitation under which Senator George worked while fabricating the new system of Southern constitutions, upon whose luminous wings that section has risen from her ashes and established a material prosperity that has surprised the world. In 1870 the total assessed property of the South was only \$3,000,000,000. Now it is over \$7,000,000,000, a sum in excess of the total possessed by the rest of the Union in 1860. Of the twelve millions of bales of cotton which she now produces annually, the South is manufacturing nearly two millions and a half of bales on her own soil. The new Southern constitutions have guaranteed a condition of peace and security out of which has grown a prosperity now being enjoyed by both races. These constitutions all provide in some form that those who are deprived of the franchise, by reason of illiteracy or poverty, can gain the right to vote by removing the disability.

Certainly, it is the duty of every Southern State to advance that process by doing all it can to educate the illiterate of both races. The writer refers with pride to the noble efforts that are being made by his own State to educate her negro population. Everybody has heard of the famous school at Tuskegee, founded by the legislature of Alabama, under an act

passed in 1880 to establish a normal school for colored people, with an annual State endowment of \$4,500. That Alabama Normal School has been developed by the genius and character of Booker Washington, backed by the generosity of the good people of the North, into the great power for good it is to-day. In the city of Huntsville may be found the Agricultural and Mechanical College for colored people, to which Alabama is contributing \$4,500 annually. In the county of Mobile is to be found a splendid system of public schools, with an average annual enrolment of about 6,000 white, and 4,000 colored, children. If you will examine the sources from which the money comes to support that system, which gives to colored children equal advantages, you will find that all but a small fraction comes from the pockets of white taxpayers, who cheerfully impose the burden on themselves. Is it, therefore, strange that, under such hopeful conditions,—in which the negro population of the South is advancing both in wealth and education,—Presidents McKinley and Roosevelt should have made peace with the South upon the basis of the new constitutions? Never was a hand raised by either against the settlement which they embody. Certainly, for twelve years the record of that settlement has been a sealed book which can never be reopened by anything less than a political revolution. That the North has no inclination whatever in that direction was recently made manifest when, in a Congress overwhelmingly Republican, all efforts to reduce the representation of the South, on the old ground, perished in a temperature below the freezing-point.

On November 7th, Mr. Wyndham R. Meredith, of Richmond, Virginia, made public a letter from President Roosevelt in which he had said: "I do not believe there is a single individual of any consequence who seriously dreams of cutting down Southern representation, and I should have no hesitation in stating anywhere, and at any time, that, as long as the election laws are constitutionally enforced without discrimination as to color, the fear that Southern representation in Congress will be cut down is both idle and absurd." As Mr. Taft was a leading factor in the Administration that thus made peace with the South, upon a basis devised by herself as the best and only one possible, has any one the right to doubt his cordial approval of the existing concordat? Certainly, his recent addresses to the people

of the South indicated an earnest desire upon his part to see that section a part of the Union in the full sense of the term. Since the above was written Mr. Taft, at the banquet given him in New York by the North Carolina Society on December 7, said:

"I believe that the movement away from political solidity has started, and ought to be encouraged; and I think one way to encourage it is to have the South understand that the attitude of the North and the Republican party toward it is not one of hostility or criticism or opposition, political or otherwise; that they believe in the maintenance of the Fifteenth Amendment, but that, as already explained, they do not deem that amendment to be inconsistent with the South's obtaining and maintaining what it regards as its political safety from domination of an ignorant electorate; that the North yearns for closer association with the South; that its citizens deprecate that reserve on the subject of politics which so long has been maintained in the otherwise delightful social relations between Southerners and Northerners as they are more and more frequently thrown together.

"We believe that the solution of the race question in the South is largely a matter of industrial and thorough education. We believe that the best friend that the Southern negro can have is the Southern white man, and that the growing interest which the Southern white man is taking in the development of the negro is one of the most encouraging reasons for believing the problem is capable of solution.

"On the whole, then, the best public opinion of the North and the best public opinion of the South seem to be coming together in respect to all the economic and political questions growing out of present race conditions.

"The recent election has made it probable that I shall become more or less responsible for the policy of the next Presidential Administration, and I improve this opportunity to say that nothing would give me greater pride, because nothing would give me more claim to the gratitude of my fellow citizens, if I could so direct that policy in respect to the Southern States as to convince its intelligent citizens of the desire of the Administration to aid them in working out satisfactorily the serious problems before them, and of bringing them and their Northern fellow citizens closer and closer in sympathy and point of view."

In the light of such cordial and sympathetic assurances from such a man, who can doubt that the South can rely as confidently upon his co-operation in the final solution of the grave problems before her, as she could rely upon the co-operation of any other statesman of any other party who might fill the Presidential office? Here we have the gist of the whole matter. The reason, the motive that prompted the organization of what is known as the Solid South has ceased to exist,—as a sectional political combi-

nation it lost its *raison d'être* with the attainment of the end for which it was designed. The South is now free to work out her destiny and to look out for her real interests, untrammelled by a force that for a long time condemned her to political isolation.

The direct and practical purpose of this article is earnestly to maintain that the time has arrived for the South to end the attitude that isolates her politically from the rest of the Union, for the simple and conclusive reason that that attitude, once vitally necessary, has lost its right to be. The time has arrived for the South to emancipate herself from the deadly one-party system which, while excluding her from political communion with the rest of the Union, at the same time strangles the political genius that was once the basis of her power. The time has arrived when the South must say to both of the great national parties that she is no longer a pocket-borough that belongs to either, but an open and unbiased field in which each, with equal opportunity for success, may struggle for the intellectual mastery of her people. Above all, the time has arrived when every Southern man, without being menaced by the banished spectre of the negro question, must be permitted to be in the South, as is every man in the North, a Democrat or a Republican, according as his real convictions lead him one way or the other.

The immense development of the manufacturing and mining interests of the South has wrought a revolution in her economic conditions,—a revolution that places large sections of her territory in the same boat with Massachusetts and Pennsylvania, so far as tariff legislation is concerned. Twenty years ago, the writer heard an eminent citizen of Philadelphia say at Mobile that the day would come when Alabama iron would undersell that of his State in her own markets. That result has happened already. The day is not far distant when Alabama's Birmingham district will rival that of which Pittsburg is the centre. Let us fancy that, in the near future, struggles over the tariff may force those two great and growing mineral districts to form a political coalition that will nominate Senator Knox, of Pittsburg, for President, and Senator Johnson, of Birmingham, for Vice-President. Would it take long for Northern prejudice against a Southern Vice-President to perish under the magic touch of a mutual interest? All we need is a beginning; at the

first blast, the empty shell of what is still called the Solid South will collapse.

Such a change should have no effect whatever upon the corporate existence of the two great parties upon which, as opposing forces, the health of our political life depends. Every patriotic American, regardless of politics, should rejoice to know that the unity of the Democratic party has been re-established, because without two such organizations representative government cannot go on in the normal way. Seldom in its history has the Democratic party had a more brilliant or persistent leader than the famous tribunitian orator from Nebraska, who wears at his buttonhole the white lily of a spotless life. But it is no more to the interest of Mr. Bryan or Mr. Parker again to lead the Solid South, fringed with a few feeble Western States, to inevitable disaster than it is to the interest of the South to court such disaster.

The Solid South has ceased to be of any value to anybody. The time has arrived when the dullest and most bigoted mind must perceive that political readjustment and realignment are for the South an imperious necessity. The solidity of the South, on sectional lines, is a calamity to the nation as a whole, because it prevents the reincorporation of a section, once in revolt, in such a way as to wipe out the last vestiges of the Civil War. The solidity of the South, on sectional lines, is a calamity to the South herself: first, because it makes political success on that basis impossible; second, because it keeps her in the attitude of a conquered province, so far as the eligibility of her leading statesmen for the supreme offices is concerned; third, because it dwarfs her political genius through abnormal conditions that prevent that kind of competition out of which her great men arose in the past. While the South still has many very able men at Washington, the comment is general that the one-party system is thinning their ranks every year.

The next eight years are to be vitally important in the economic history of the South. Her growing manufactures, her rapidly developing mineral resources, her swelling cotton crop are to be touched at many points not only by the internal legislation that will proceed from Congress, but by that far-reaching foreign policy that is extending our destiny beyond the limits of this hemisphere. The South stands in a special relation to

the territorial expansion that followed the close of the Spanish-American war, and to the commercial expansion that now includes the Antilles and the States of Central and South America. In 1899, the imports from Latin-America were \$154,495,834; the exports, \$97,391,898,—total, \$251,887,732. In 1907 the imports were \$316,496,576; the exports \$237,840,676,—total, \$554,337,252,—an increase of \$302,449,520. No true Southern heart can fail to be gladdened by the sight, at Mobile and New Orleans, of the wharves crowded as they are with steamships, bearing among other things tropical fruits from the lands to the south of us. Often on a busy day the trains necessary at Mobile to transport such products to the West, if placed end to end, would be a mile long. To that growing prosperity by sea the building of the Panama Canal is giving a marked impetus. When, after completion, that vast enterprise shall drop a dollar into the till at Boston, it will drop fifty into the tills at Mobile and New Orleans. When that new waterway is opened up to the Far East for Southern products peculiarly adapted to Oriental markets, the South will enter upon a fresh stage of progress whose possibilities can scarcely be estimated. In 1852, William H. Seward, forecasting, in a speech delivered in the United States Senate, the growing greatness of the Pacific, said: "Henceforth, European commerce, European politics, European thought and European activity, although actually gaining force, and European connections, although actually becoming more intimate, will, nevertheless, relatively sink in importance; while the Pacific Ocean, its shores, its islands and the vast region beyond will become the chief theatre of events in the world's great hereafter." With that "great hereafter,"—interlaced, as it now is, with the Panama Canal, the Philippine and Hawaiian Islands, and Alaska,—the future of the South is more intimately bound up than that of any other part of the Union. As the visions of her statesmen widen, they will see by the light of self-interest, in the not far-distant future, that the South has a special concern in the possession and development of every island we now possess in the Pacific Ocean. With the possession and development of that Pacific world, including the building of the Panama Canal, the trained statesman who will soon assume the headship of the nation has had a long and honorable connection. As he is specially committed to the advancement of this line of foreign

policy in which the South is vitally concerned, would it not be wisdom upon her part to extend to him her earnest co-operation, apart from and above all partisan considerations? Is it not a good time for the South to make a new departure along the lines of her real interests? If she is ever to regain in this Union the vantage-ground which she occupied at the beginning of our national life, it must be through such a development of her material resources as will multiply her wealth and population.

When, in the Federal Convention of 1787, the struggle over the apportionment of representation was at its height, the larger or national States, with Virginia and South Carolina in the lead, vigorously opposed the equal representation in the Senate of the States as such. Speaking for Virginia, Randolph contended that population should be the sole basis of representation for both chambers; speaking for South Carolina, Butler said: "It was not supposed that North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia would have more people than all the other States, but many more, relatively to the other States, than they now have. *The people and strength of America are evidently bearing southwardly and southwestwardly.*" Underestimating the dynamic energy of freedom in producing wealth and attracting and retaining population, the South was deluded at the time in question by the belief that swarms of emigrants were about to throng every path to the southwest, bearing with them power and affluence. But population swept on the other way, until the result was that the equal representation of the States in the Senate, which the South had so earnestly opposed, became her last refuge. In the light of that great mistake, the South should now understand that, if swarms of emigrants are to be attracted to the Southwest, laden with power and affluence, all local influences must be removed that forbid the free exercise of political opinion. The man who comes from the West or from New England to Georgia, Alabama or Mississippi must be assured in advance that he may bring with him, free from all social pressure, his political opinions. Why, then, should not the sons of the South, "native and to the manor born," be permitted to enjoy the same privilege.

Excepting only Washington, the South's greatest gift to the Union was John Marshall, of Virginia, out of whose sane and

practical construction of the Constitution has arisen the jurisdiction now exercised by the Supreme Court of the United States. As one of his humblest disciples, the writer has from his youth up firmly rejected as illogical and harmful the opposite system of construction usually associated with the names of Jefferson and Calhoun. The one particular in which the writer has been able cordially to accept the distinctive views of Jefferson is that involved in his patriotic and far-sighted efforts as the founder of our existing system of territorial and commercial expansion. By the Louisiana Purchase—from his point of view an unconstitutional act—he assured our future greatness by doubling our domain; in his famous letter of October 24th, 1823, in which he drafted the so-called “Monroe Doctrine,” he said: “I candidly confess that I have ever looked on Cuba as the most interesting addition which could ever be made to our system of States. The control which, with Florida Point, this island would give us over the Gulf of Mexico and the countries *and isthmus* bordering on it, as well as those whose waters flow into it, would fill up the measure of our political well-being.”

Among the more thoughtful men of the South, who make a systematic study of the science of government and diplomacy, there is a large and growing body who perfectly understand (1) that John Marshall’s rational and practical system of constitutional construction is a necessary element in our national growth; (2) that the Jeffersonian idea of territorial and trade expansion is the key to the South’s future development. That large and growing body will not permit itself to be forced much longer to profess allegiance to a set of extinct political theories by the spectre of a danger that has passed away.

HANNIS TAYLOR.